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AF/S FOR HTREGER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KCOR KCRIM PGOV MZ

SUBJECT: ANIBALZINHO ATTEMPS YET ANOTHER ESCAPE; SECOND TRY
IN LESS THAN A MONTH

REF: A. MAPUTO 00106

1B. 05 MAPUTO 01569

1C. 05 MAPUTO 01555

¶1. Mozambican police reportedly frustrated another attempted prison break by Anibal dos Santos Junior (Anibalzinho), the man convicted of leading the group responsible for the November 2000 murder of Mozambique's foremost investigative journalist, Carlos Cardoso. Anibalzinho is currently serving a 30-year sentence for his involvement in the murder plot (ref A). On the evening of April 12, a night guard at the Maputo Police Command discovered that one of the bars in Anibalzinho's cell had been sawed through; saw blades were found during a subsequent search of his cell and bathroom. Police officials were reportedly puzzled at how the blades were smuggled in to the prison. According to press reports, an inquiry has been launched to determine whether police connivance was involved.

¶2. This is Anibalzinho's second unsuccessful escape attempt in less than a month. On March 17 police at the Maputo Police Command seized an improvised escape kit (a screwdriver, glue and shoe polish) hidden in food and hygiene items being delivered to Anibalzinho by a young, female relative. Following that incident, police suspended outside visits and food deliveries to Anibalzinho. Two days later, Anibalzinho allegedly tried to hang himself in his cell with a makeshift noose, stating later that he sought to end his life because he had been betrayed by the people who "obliged him to lie" during his December retrial (refs A and B). The suicide attempt was reportedly foiled by a police guard on duty at the time.

¶3. Comment: Anibalzinho has shown an apparent knack for eluding prison authorities (refs). In 2003 Anibalzinho was tried and convicted in absentia for his role in the Cardoso murder; he had escaped from Maputo's Maximum Security Prison and was at large at the time of the trial. Captured and returned to jail, in May 2004 Anibalzinho made a second escape from the same maximum security facility. He was eventually arrested in Canada and deported back to Mozambique in January 2005. Since then he has been held at the Maputo City Police Command, considered a more secure facility. However, these two most recent escape attempts from this facility, though foiled, have again raised concerns over the police's ability to keep this notorious criminal behind bars, as well as questions about who on the inside is assisting him in his efforts to escape.

La Lime